

Volunteering with Bethesda Hospice Care

The Bethesda Hospice Care volunteer program provides the opportunity to be a part of a fantastic team of caring professionals and volunteers who care for senior citizens in their final stage of life. Volunteers play a vital role on our team, providing companionship to hospice patients and assisting staff members with administrative tasks. Here's why you should choose Bethesda Hospice Care for your volunteering:

- Dedicated Volunteer Coordinator on staff: you'll be well-supported in your service.
- Volunteers are crucial members of our team: your feedback will be valued!
- Comprehensive training: we'll make sure you feel well-trained and comfortable in your duties.
- Flexible schedule: volunteers choose when and how often to visit patients.
- Convenient locations: volunteers can choose to visit patients at the Bethesda communities that are most conveniently located for them.
- Volunteer appreciation: we celebrate your service with volunteer events and recognition throughout the year!
- No costs associated with volunteering: we'll cover the cost of required background checks, and will provide a free annual flu shot.
- We honor veterans: we are the only hospice in the St. Louis area to earn a Five Star Rating from the We Honor Veterans program; we go above and beyond for our veterans!

Testimonials from Current Volunteers

"It is such a pleasure and privilege to get to know the patients with whom I visit. I felt called to the program as an opportunity to pay it forward and to honor the memory of someone very special in my life. For me, it's about connection of the human spirit. My very first hospice patient turned 108 during the several months I had the opportunity to visit with her. She loved church music, and we would sing together and clap hands together during some of our visits. It was wonderful to see her eyes light up, to hear her remember some of the words from those old hymns - she was absolutely beautiful in her enjoyment."

- Teresa Buehler, Bethesda Hospice Care Volunteer since 2015

"I feel I can make a difference in someone's life. After having a mother in skilled nursing for six years, I'm fully aware of the need of residents to see a friendly face and have someone else to talk with. Each moment of appreciation shared with me keeps me going. We all need a purpose in life, and I can't think of anything more fulfilling than receiving a smile or hearing laughter when I'm reading a book with beautiful illustrations that arouse an interest."

- Jeanette Kille, Bethesda Hospice Care Volunteer since 2010

"My time with the patients keeps me coming back to volunteer. Just showing up means a lot to somebody; if you just sit and listen, you've done all you need to do. The daughter of one of my patients once told me, 'You have no idea what it means to know that someone is caring for her.'"

- Mary Taylor, Bethesda Hospice Care Volunteer since 2013

What Kind of Volunteer Opportunities Are There?

Volunteering with Bethesda Hospice Care is a wonderful way to help others and make a difference in your community, while meeting new people and learning more about yourself. Here are some ways that you could volunteer with Bethesda Hospice Care:

Caring Companions

As a Caring Companion, you will gain the deep satisfaction of helping people in their final stage of life to have the best quality of life possible. Caring Companions provide a caring presence to those who are nearing end-of-life, doing activities such as listening to life stories, taking patients outdoors to enjoy the fresh air, reading aloud to patients, listening to music together, looking at picture albums together, and generally providing companionship.

Comforting Music Companions

As a Comforting Music Companion, you can use your skills and talents to bring the comfort of music to hospice patients! Comforting Music Companions play instruments or sing for patients, providing them with live music for relaxation, pain management, and overall well-being.

NODA Trained Volunteers

As a “No One Dies Alone” (NODA) volunteer, you can provide a caring presence for hospice patients who have reached the final days or hours of their life. Here are some things you could do as a NODA companion: read to patients, play soothing music for them, hold their hand, pray for them, observe for any pain or discomfort, and be a compassionate presence in their final hours.

Veteran-to-Veteran Companions

As a Veteran-to-Veteran Companion, you can provide unique support to veterans at end-of-life through companionship, compassionate listening, and grateful acknowledgement of their military service. Veteran Companions are able to connect deeply with veterans on hospice care, providing them with the opportunity to reminisce about their military experience and possibly share memories of combat.

Office Volunteers

As an Office Volunteer, you can use your clerical skills to support our hospice team with crucial, behind-the-scenes projects! Depending on your skills and interests, you can provide assistance with hospice and bereavement mailings, data entry, filing, organization, or event planning.

How to Volunteer

To learn more about volunteering, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Melissa Helmkamp at MAHelmkamp@bethesdahealth.org.